

Special Meeting Tuesday May 17, 2011
One Twin Pines Lane, Third Floor Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER 8:20 P.M.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Feierbach, Lieberman, Wozniak, Braunstein

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Warden

Staff Present: City Clerk Cook

COUNCILMEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Feierbach announced that she had just received an email from Finance Commission Jeffrey Hyman, advising of his immediate resignation from the Commission.

City Clerk Cook noted that this has resulted in a lack of quorum of members of the Finance Commission.

Interview candidates for Finance Commission

Michael Peterson stated that he has lived in Belmont since 1975. He noted that while he was Principal of Serra High School in San Mateo, he had much experience dealing with the City of San Mateo as a client. He stated that he has thought about running for City Council in the past, and was encouraged to do so by others. He applauds the work of the City Council. He has a desire to build consensus regarding the budget, and he commented on the need to get people involved in the process. He stated that Belmont is a well-run city. He has not attended any Finance Commission meetings but has read minutes of past meetings. He stated that since he is retired, he can make a commitment. Since retiring from Serra he has been approached for various consulting jobs in the area of fundraising. He outlined his current position for Borel Bank as a client recruiter. He also ushers games at Stanford University. He noted that personal service is important and he can see the big financial picture. He stated that the Finance Commission is a recommending body on items directed by the City Council.

Mr. Peterson described his experience in fundraising for capital projects while at Serra High School. He cited the need to believe in a project in order to ask people for money. In response to Councilmember Wozniak, he clarified he would want to know more about potential projects in Belmont before becoming involved in fundraising. He stated that high speed rail and Belmont's sewer system needs to be addressed. He noted there is a need to retain good personnel, and he is concerned regarding retirement and workers compensation benefits, but that the City has an obligation to existing employees. He explained that the Finance Commission could be part of the discussion on all of these matters.

Mr. Peterson acknowledged the issues with the fire department, and stated that discussion should be had with regard to consolidation and regionalism. He commented that some departments

might be administratively top heavy, including schools.

In response to Mr. Peterson's questions regarding the function of the Finance Commission, Councilmember Wozniak explained that it oversees the budget and provides advice regarding budget cuts. She stated that the City Council often passes issues to the Commission for in-depth review. Councilmember Braunstein noted that the Finance Commission provides more eyes on the budget, and it has reviewed proposed bond measures in previous years. He expressed his desire that the Finance Commission be more involved.

Mayor Feierbach described the differences of opinion that existed on the Finance Commission regarding its role. She noted that the Commissioners ask many detailed questions regarding the budget, and explained that there is not enough staff time to devote to issues that the Finance Commission would like to address.

Councilmember Lieberman described the previous appointment process, and noted that now the Commissioners are political appointees. He noted that the Commission can be a sounding board for the Finance Department, and is most useful when it has specific projects to shepherd. He described the Commission's involvement during the previous fire dissolution process, and noted that the Commission was not asked to become involved during the current dissolution.

Mr. Peterson stated the need for groups to work together for consensus, and cited the need to utilize commissions for the betterment of Belmont. He noted this could result in buy-in regarding City Council decisions.

Marcie Dompier (Incumbent), stated that she was hesitant in reapplying because of time constraints. She explained that the Commission Chair asked her to reapply due to lack of candidates. She is unsure of a long-term commitment. She noted that Thursday meetings are difficult due to family issues. She explained that she was initially appointed to the Commission during its transition from self-appointment to Council appointment. She noted that the Commission reviews and makes recommendations regarding the Budget, but does not see an end product. She outlined areas that the Commission has provided input in the past, including the prefunding of retirement benefits, sewer bonds, the Recology franchise agreement, and budget feedback. She expressed her desire for more City Council feedback regarding Commission input. She stated she has enjoyed getting to know the inner workings of the City budget process.

Councilmember Wozniak noted that it would be helpful for Finance Commissioners to attend City Council meetings on a regular basis.

Pragati Sharma (via telephone) expressed her desire to get involved in the community. She recognizes the need to learn more about the function of the Finance Commission. She outlined her budget management experience on multi-million dollar projects. She expressed the need to be efficient but not compromise on quality, and to forecast. She would like to add value to the process.

City Clerk Cook stated that due to the latest resignation of Finance Commissioner Hyman, the Commission does not have a quorum.

Councilmember Wozniak expressed the need to discuss the function of the Finance Commission.

ACTION: Councilmember Lieberman made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Braunstein, to appoint Marcie Dompier to a term that expires in March of 2014, and to appoint Michael Peterson and Pragati Sharma to vacant terms expiring in March of 2013, and to leave the remaining vacant term expiring in 2012 vacant.

ACTION: Councilmember Wozniak requested that Councilmember Lieberman amend his motion to appoint Marcie Dompier to the term expiring in 2012. She noted that Ms. Dompier expressed a desire to fill in for the short term. Councilmember Lieberman accepted this amendment.

ACTION: On the original motion, as amended, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to approve the following resolutions:

Approval of Resolution 10369 Appointing Michael Peterson and Pragati Sharma to vacant terms on the Finance Commission expiring in March of 2013.

Approval of Resolution 10370 Appointing Marcie Dompier to a vacant term on the Finance Commission expiring in March of 2012.

Council concurred to leave vacant the three-year term set to expire in March of 2014.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:45 P.M.

**Terri Cook
City Clerk**

Meeting Tape Recorded but not Videotaped
Audio Recording 789